



MENOMINEE INDIAN TRIBE OF WISCONSIN

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MENOMINEE INDIAN TRIBE ADOPTS EMERGENCY ORDINANCE TO COMBAT VHS

KESHENA, WI – On June 11, 2007, the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin enacted an emergency ordinance aimed at preventing the spread of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) to reservation lakes and streams. Emergency Ordinance No. 07-01, "Regulations to Control the Spread of Fish and Disease and Exotic Species on the Menominee Reservation" requires all boats and watercraft entering Reservation waters to be disinfected before launching. Similarly, any boats or watercraft leaving Reservation lakes or streams will be required to be cleaned and drained of any water. Tribal leaders and resource managers believe that the safeguards set forth in Ordinance No. 07-01 are essential to the economic wellbeing of the Tribe, and the immediate health and welfare of the tribal membership and its valuable natural resources.

During the summer months, the Menominee Indian Reservation's lakes and waterways experience increased recreational use with numerous watercrafts from outside communities being used in reservation waters. There is high risk of spreading VHS if fishermen or recreational users bring in boats from lakes outside the Reservation/County (especially Lake Winnebago). Outside watercraft pose a threat to the Tribe's valuable natural resources as they are a vehicle for spreading exotic species and diseases like VHS. To some, this step may seem premature or too drastic, but professionals in the field of natural resources feel otherwise. To be completely safe, it must be assumed that that VHS has already been introduced into Menominee Lakes.

The Tribe's Conservation Department will begin immediate enforcement of this ordinance starting with routine spot checks of all watercraft at boat launching areas. The public is encouraged to cooperate with conservation wardens in its enforcement of the ordinance, and to report suspected violations to conservation wardens or other law enforcement personnel. The public is also encouraged to contact conservation wardens if it observes any sick or dead fish in reservation waters.

If you would like more information about the Tribe's response to VHS, please contact Walter Cox, Conservation Director, at (715) 799-5116. – /s/ Lisa Waukau